

Grey Bruce – Climate Action Network Mapping

John Anderson

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Summary

The purpose of this project is to capture the current state of climate action in each of the upper and lower tier municipalities for Bruce and Grey Counties but also including Collingwood in Simcoe County. The mapping products include an Excel spreadsheet and a schematic map. The information was based on input from engaged citizens and councillors. These are working documents that will need to be updated as progress is made in taking climate action across the Bruce-Grey Region.

There are a number of different citizen groups that focus on different topics but all lead towards “greener and cleaner” communities. These include: climate action teams; sustainability committees; and Transition Town Network members. It is possible that we can expand the GB-CAN by including other local groups when these groups have a focus on climate change. Examples of current collaborations include NeighbourWoods North (tree planting) and Waste Watchers (waste reduction) of Owen Sound. GBCAN would need to reach out to these groups.

There are notable differences across the different municipal councils where some appear to have no interest climate action planning. These councils are content to focus on specific issues such as waste management, tree planting or flood control. Effective climate action requires an overarching plan that embraces both mitigation and adaptation policies. The municipalities that are progressive on climate action have: (1) an active citizens group; (2) engaged and sincere councillors; and (3) support from municipal staff. Key components among these progressive councils appears to be communication and education. An emerging factor is an increasing awareness of cost savings to be achieved in both mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts. The Build Back Better initiative of the World Economic Forum being adopted in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada will drive economic incentives to become greener and cleaner.

The Spreadsheet

The spreadsheet is a starting point for capturing and embedding information. Climate action is centred around the concepts of declaring a “climate emergency” and engaging with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) and Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) programs. It also includes key citizen and councillor contacts that appears to be essential in driving climate action initiatives. Missing from the spreadsheet, at this point, is any staff contact. There is some sensitivity to staff engaging directly with citizens and not going through council. There is also the awareness that staff can recommend but not enact climate action.

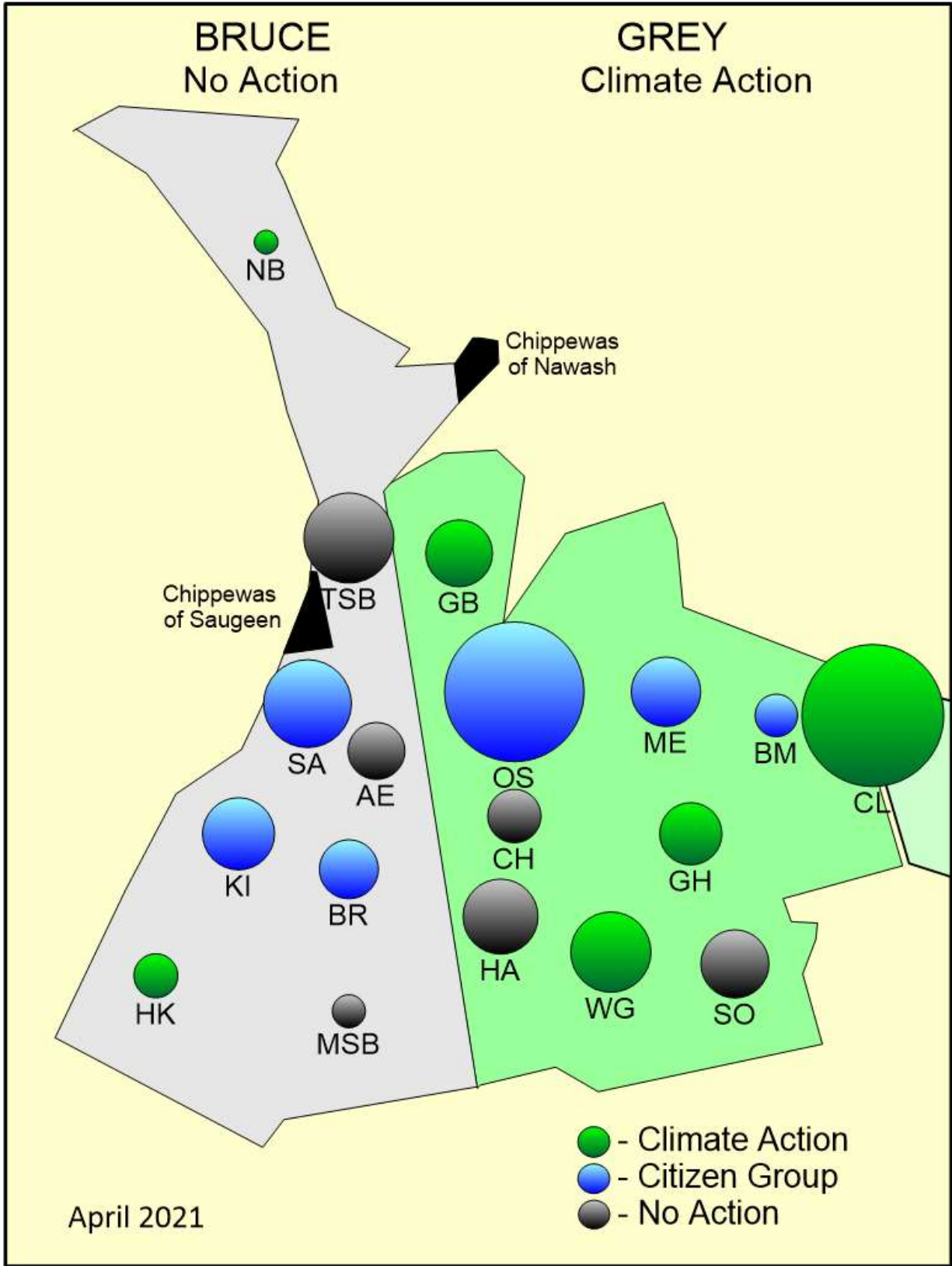
Three colours represent different stages of climate action. Dark grey indicates no action identified by either council or citizens. Blue represents an active citizens group engaging with councillors and/or the declaration of a climate emergency by a local council. Green represents a council committed to developing and implementing a Climate Action Plan (CAP). This is the starting point for taking climate action. Without a CAP any progress on climate action is piecemeal and ultimately will fail to build resilient and sustainable communities.

The Schematic Map

The schematic map is a relative scale of a lower tier municipality's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG, tonnes CO_{2e} per year). Combined, these represent the total emissions for each county. The emissions are based on current population size (2016 census) and the average Ontario GHG emission of 12.3 tonnes CO_{2e} per person per year. Each community is represented by a bubble that varies in size with its carbon footprint and the shading reflects: no action (dark grey); citizen action or the declaration of a climate emergency (blue); and council action (green). The map helps to convey the level of progress we are making in reference to the total carbon emissions of Grey and Bruce counties. The map will parallel changes in the spreadsheet but it is less complex, intending to display climate action in a simple but meaningful way.

From the map it is easy to see that Grey County is taking climate action and, as of spring 2021, three lower tier municipalities have now committed to climate action: Grey Highlands, West Grey and Georgian Bluffs. Bruce County has taken no climate action but two of its lower tier municipalities are taking action; the municipalities of Northern Bruce Peninsula and Huron-Kinloss. Collingwood is a progressive community taking climate action and has the most active citizens group in the region.

The map demonstrates the largest municipalities in Bruce and Grey Counties, Saugeen Shores and Owen Sound, have taken no action on climate change. Lower tier municipalities taking climate action account for 17% of total emissions in Bruce County and 35% in Grey County. Collingwood represents 7% of total emissions in Simcoe County.



Schematic map of climate action in Grey and Bruce Counties, Ontario February 2021. The size of each bubble represents the relative size of GHG emissions from each lower tier municipality. Green – Climate Action: has joined FCM-PCP and is developing and implementing a Climate Action Plan; Blue – Citizen Group: a local citizens group has formed to work within the community and may be partnering with municipal councils; Grey – No Action: nothing has been done to take climate action at the community or municipal level. NBP – North Bruce Peninsula; TSB – Town of South Bruce; SAS – Town of Saugeen Shores; A-E – Municipality of Arran-Elderslie; KIN – Municipality of Kincardine; BRO – Municipality of Brockton; H-K – Township of Huron-Kinloss; MSB – Municipality of South Bruce; GBL – Township of Georgian Bluffs; OSN – City of Owen Sound; MEF – Municipality of Meaford; TBM – Town of the Blue Mountains; CHA – Township of Chatsworth; GRH – Municipality of Grey Highlands; HAN – Town of Hanover; WGR – Municipality of West Grey; SOG – Township of Southgate.